

MISSOURI. Conservationist

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Shaw Nature Reserve

Achieving the varied objectives of the Conservation Department requires creativity and collaboration. We often turn to outside experts to meet important needs and generate stronger

conservation results. One such partnership is developing just outside St. Louis to advance the goals of the Grow Native! initiative and to help more Missourians enjoy and experience nature at a very special place.

The Grow Native! program was created to promote the use of native plants in gardening and landscaping on both a residential and commercial scale. The use of native plants directly benefits fish, forests and wildlife and provides niche markets for the agriculture sector as well. The program combines public education efforts and services with the native plant industry, which in turn provides native plants and seed to consumers. Grow Native! is off to a good start, but the rapidly developing body of knowledge surrounding native plant production requires special expertise. Therefore, we turned to the able staff of the Shaw Nature Reserve for help.

The Shaw Nature Reserve is a beautiful 2,400-acre property bordering the Meramec River in Franklin County. It is owned and operated by the Missouri Botanical Garden, a prestigious organization with outstanding philanthropic support for its plant science research around the world and display gardens in St. Louis. We are indeed fortunate to have the Garden and its president, Dr. Peter Raven.

The native plant experts at the Shaw Nature Reserve are working under contract to produce technical guides on native landscaping for homeowners, nurseries and landscape professionals. These experts also host Native Plant School, a series of native plant workshops for the public and professionals. The public workshops are held at the Shaw Nature Reserve in Gray Summit, while the professional workshops are held at the Al-

berici Corporation in Overland. The native landscaping and environmental design of the Alberici world headquarters is an outstanding example of the practices Grow Native! supports.

In addition, the Shaw Nature Reserve is ideally suited for public visitation and the quality outdoor experiences promoted by the Department. It is dedicated to environmental education, to the maintenance and restoration of the region's native flora and fauna, and to public enjoyment of the natural world. There are excellent walking trails throughout the property.

We work cooperatively on a number of special events, including Prairie Day, Missouri Outdoor Women weekend and special workshops on native plants. Shaw Nature Reserve supports expanded programming and educational activities cosponsored and led by the Department. They are especially interested in technical assistance to increase beneficial habitats for wildlife species. The possibility of a

managed hunt to control the deer population on a portion of the Reserve is under consideration to provide a quality hunting experience for youth or disabled Missouri citizens. It is a special place, ready-made for nature study and group learning that, if starting from scratch, would take the Department years to develop.

We are excited that this partnership will provide more Missouri citizens a place to safely enjoy the satisfaction, fun and excitement of time spent in nature. We encourage you to visit the Shaw Nature Reserve and the Grow Native! Web site to learn more about native plants and their importance.

John Hoskins, director











OUR MISSION: *To protect and manage the fish, forest and wildlife resources of the state; to serve the public and facilitate their participation in resource management activities; and to provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about fish, forest and wildlife resources.*



On the cover and left: Read Mark Goodwin's article (starting on page 14) about how to use decoys to hunt turkeys in open fields. Photos by Noppadol Paothong.

NextGEN

This section reports on goals established in *The Next Generation of Conservation*. To read more about this plan, visit www.MissouriConservation.org/12843.

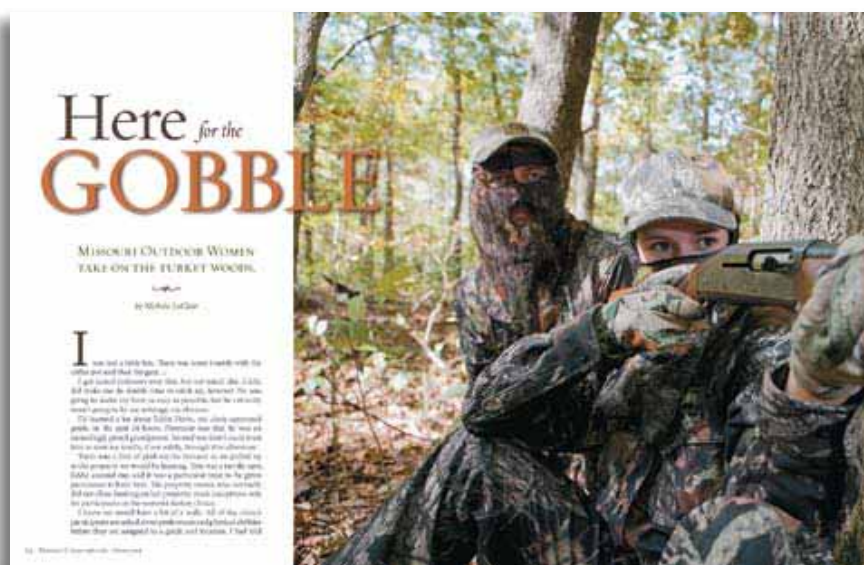
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GOBBLE GUIDES

I just finished reading a wonderful story by Nichole LeClair [*Here for the Gobble*; February].

It revolved around her spring turkey hunt with the Missouri Outdoor Women. If there is ever a need for additional qualified guides, I would enjoy the opportunity to offer my services.

Clint Chandler, Shelbina

Editor's note: Volunteers are the secret to much of the Department's success with outdoor skills courses. To learn more about volunteering for courses offered through the Missouri Outdoor Women's program, contact your Regional Office (see phone numbers on Page 3). MOW offers courses covering a variety of outdoor skills, including fishing, hunting, hiking, nature viewing, dutch-oven cooking, shooting sports and safety, archery, using maps, compasses and GPS, and more. For upcoming events, you can also visit their Web site at www.MissouriConservation.org/13108.

NOT HUNTING HEAVY

I just received my March issue and it is as great as always. I am troubled by the letter to the editor entitled "Hunting Heavy." I find that your magazine represents the essence of your mission statement: "To protect and manage the fish, forest and wildlife resources of the state; to serve the public and facilitate their participation in resource management activities; and to provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy and learn about fish, forest and wildlife resources."

A reasonable person understands that we all have different interests and viewpoints. To take a stab at your well-balanced magazine for the

sake of forcing an individual viewpoint or opinion is shameful. I take my three girls hunting and fishing; besides enjoying the time with my daughters I hope to instill patience, persistence and pride in them. Be proud of yourself and let others be proud of themselves.

Andrew Hoffman, Warrenton

I am writing in response to a letter to the editor in the March issue ["Hunting Heavy"] that disagreed with the number of hunting articles in the February issue. Though I respect the other reader's difference of opinion, I would like to say thank you for your many hunting-related stories.

There are many new hunters in the woods every year, young and old. You do a great job of educating those new hunters, improving safety for us all. These new hunters need to know how to hunt safely and process their meat after the hunt. Keep up the good work.

Travis Peterson, Jasper

HAWKS ON THE HIGHWAY

I picked up my January issue and noticed *Hawks on Parade* [Page 5]. Traveling home on Hwy 24 from spending New Year's in Nashville, I saw a great number of hawks dead on the side of the road. As we came up from Sikeston I noticed the same thing on Hwy. 55. Is there an explanation?

Dave Crowley, Oakville

Editor's note: According to Brad Jacobs, Department ornithologist, "The region you were traveling through is a major wintering area for hawks due to the large rodent populations associated with the waste grains from agriculture. Rodents usually live in burrows in grasslands; so, the median and roadside grassland are about the only places to forage. Most of the hawks are red-tailed hawks, which hunt from a perch and catch their prey by stooping or dropping off the perch, gliding down to catch their prey. They are so focused on the prey that they don't watch the vehicles that are whizzing by and get hit. It is a fairly significant loss over time, but the solution to it is probably with drivers being more vigilant."



Red-tailed hawk

HAWK: JIM RATHER



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Reader Photo SNAP SHOT

John Moeser took this photo of a three-toed box turtle at his home near Kelso. "I took a series of shots as it overcame its shyness and peeked out of its shell. When I was done I put the turtle back where I had gotten it and watched awhile longer as it slowly worked its way through the clover," said Moeser. Box turtles start becoming active soon after the last killing frost, between late March and late April.

on the WEB

This month check out our featured Web pages, or go online anytime to learn more about conservation at www.MissouriConservation.org.



TURKEY HUNTING

www.MissouriConservation.org/7498

Take this opportunity to learn about wild turkeys, how you can enjoy turkey hunting and perhaps improve your chances of bagging a turkey.



KIDS' FISHING DAYS

www.MissouriConservation.org/4164

The Missouri Department of Conservation and sponsoring organizations provide young anglers and their families with opportunities to learn to fish.



MUSHROOMS

www.MissouriConservation.org/8360

Many species of mushrooms in Missouri are edible, but proper identification is essential to avoid illness and even death by toxic mushrooms.



ASK THE OMBUDSMAN

Q: I've noticed a lot of different ways to clean fish. What is the best method?

A: There are a variety of ways to clean fish, and I suspect this is a subjective matter, with anglers having a variety of preferences. The type of fish and how it will be prepared can determine which cleaning method to use.

Deep-frying suckers might call for scaling and filleting and then scoring, but that's not the only way I've seen. Some anglers prefer to cut off the heads and fins, gut and skin the fish and then score down to the backbone. Either will work. Seems most trout anglers simply gut and gill their catch, then grill or bake the fish with the head attached. I haven't noticed too many folks eating the head, but I recall several recipes for fish chowder that include the head and backbone for stock.

Most anglers agree bones are the biggest drawback to a good fish meal (unless you're dealing with canned fish, in which case pressure cooking makes the bones edible). When done correctly, filleting eliminates the bone problem. The following PDFs can be downloaded from the Web and might be helpful for those wanting to filet their catch. The second PDF provides details on how to butterfly filet, which is removing all the bones and leaving the fish whole. Remember to check for the fine bones about midway back on the centerline of a filet. They can be removed by simply notching the centerline. Regardless of the method used, practice is important.

mdc4.mdc.mo.gov/tv/hints/fillet_fish.pdf

www.wvu.edu/~agexten/aquaculture/troutproc.pdf

Ombudsman Ken Drenon will respond to your questions, suggestions or complaints concerning Department of Conservation programs. Write him at PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180, call him at 573-522-4115, ext. 3848, or e-mail him at Ken.Drenon@mdc.mo.gov.

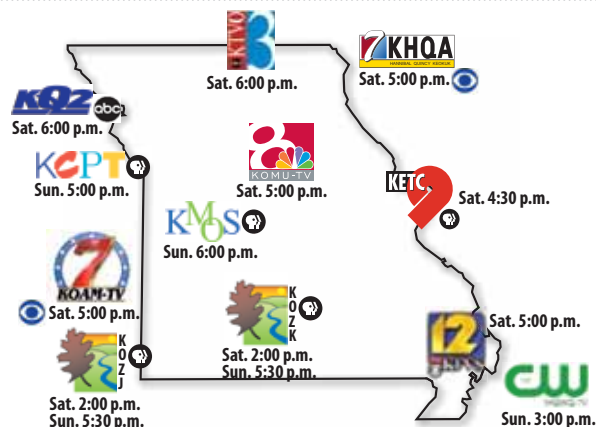
on the TV

For additional show information and video clips, be sure to visit

www.MissouriConservation.org/8726.



Television the way nature intended!





Species of Concern **Three-toed Amphiuma**



Common name: Three-toed Amphiuma

Scientific names: *Amphiuma tridactylum*

Range: Southeast Missouri

Classification: State imperiled

To learn more about endangered species: www.MissouriConservation.org/8227

THIS IS MISSOURI'S longest salamander, growing to more than 30 inches. It is easy to mistake for a snake, but it has four tiny legs and lacks scales. Amphiumas also are called Congo eels, conger eels or blue eels, but they are amphibians, not fish. Amphiumas live in ditches, sloughs and cypress swamps in 10 counties of Missouri's Bootheel. This is on the northwestern edge of the species' national range, which extends from Texas to Alabama and northward to southeastern Missouri and southwestern Kentucky. Amphiumas come out at night to hunt for crayfish, worms, insects, tadpoles, snails and small fish. Females lay about 200 eggs in late summer or early autumn, usually under rotten logs near water. They stay with the eggs throughout most of their five-month incubation. Amphiumas have lungs and come to the surface to breathe. They will bite, but they are not venomous. If you catch one on a hook, cut the line to release it.

The Day for Returns

Two sure things on April 15—taxes and hummingbirds.

Most people think of April 15 as the deadline for filing tax returns, but it also is the approximate date when Missourians first see ruby-throated hummingbirds each year. Now is the time to refill nectar feeders and put them out. A mixture of four or five cups of water to one cup of sugar meets the tiny birds' needs. Refrigerate extra nectar until it is needed. Wash, sterilize and refill feeders weekly for best results. For more details, visit www.MissouriConservation.org/8177.



Luna Time

In April they live their life in pursuit of love.

If you were looking for a six-legged symbol of love, you could do worse than the luna moth, *Actias luna*. Romance consumes adult lunas' one-week life on the wing. These members of the silk-moth family lack mouth parts. Undistracted by hunger or thirst, males follow invisible trails of pheromone molecules to stationary females. Clutches of 100 to 300 eggs take 10 days or so to hatch. The green caterpillars spend two months eating the leaves of hardwood trees before spinning silken cocoons. There they turn into brown, hard-shelled pupae that take two weeks to transform into adults.

The last of each year's two or three generations of luna moths goes dormant, waiting until the following spring to emerge. For more information, visit www.butterfliesandmoths.org.





NextGen

Calling All Rockwoods Lovers

Help keep this fabulous area rockin'.

St. Louis area residents who love Rockwoods Reservation can help keep this premier hiking destination in western St. Louis County a natural treasure. Starting April 4, you can reserve your place in the first Rockwoods Habitat Restoration Day, scheduled for April 19. Volunteers will help area staff control invasive plants that are damaging the area. The event is open to volunteers age 7 and older. It is an excellent project for scouts, organized civic groups, and families. Call 636-458-2236 for reservations.



bass. Big-river species grow less common the farther you go upstream, and bluegill, longear and orangespot sunfish become more common. Wade-fishing the upper portion of the creek can produce nice messes of panfish and bass. Ask permission before crossing private land.

Moniteau Creek

Catch hefty flatheads and feisty panfish.

Some of Missouri's biggest fishing fun is found on small streams. Central Missouri's Moniteau Creek is a good example. The best fishing is in the 20 miles or so from Highway O in southeastern Cooper County to Marion Access in Cole County. Motor boats might be able to go as far as Haldiman Branch, a northern tributary that diverges four or five miles upstream from the Missouri River. From there on you need a canoe or a kayak. The deep, still water between Highway 179 and the mouth of Moniteau Creek holds flathead and channel catfish, common carp, gar and largemouth

Trail Guide



HIGH COTTON FOR BIRDERS



BIRDWATCHERS ARE IN high cotton at this diverse area in northwestern Callaway County. Habitats from lake, wetlands and fishless ponds to oak-hickory forests and old fields attract a wide variety of birds.

Documented sightings include ospreys, white-winged scoters, bald eagles, double-crested cormorants, common loons and a host of more common waterfowl, birds of prey and songbirds. Nearly 11 miles of trails provide access to this birding feast. The 6-mile Boundary Trail follows a dirt road encircling 205-acre Little Dixie Lake. A 2-mile portion of the Shoreline Trail meanders north from the main parking lot near the lake's southwestern end through forest and field to a parking area northwest of the lake. Visitors with mobility impairments will find the paved Dixie Woods Nature Trail best-suited for their use. This .4-mile loop has benches for resting and interpretive signs describing the area's natural communities.

Area name: Little Dixie CA

Trails: Three, totaling nearly 11 miles

Unique features: Diverse bird life

For more information: Call 573-884-6861 or visit www.MissouriConservation.org/a5904

MONITEAU: CLIFF WHITE; TRAIL GUIDE: DAVID STONNER



TAKING ACTION

Little Creek Nature Area Restoration



Groups Featured: Ferguson-Florissant School District, Department of Conservation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, East-West Gateway Council of Governments, City of Florissant, Great Rivers Greenway District, Metropolitan Sewer District, Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation, Open Space Council, Saint Louis Christian College, Soil & Water Conservation District, St. Louis County Special School District.

Group Mission: Preserve and restore Little Creek Nature Area.

Project location: 2295 Dunn Road, Florissant, MO 63033

JACK BOWLES AND Jaime Meier are on a mission to connect youngsters in the Ferguson-Florissant school district with nature. Bowles teaches students in his science class about native plants and wildlife at the district's 96-acre Little Creek Nature Area, and for the past six years he and art teacher Meier have worked to preserve Little Creek's natural features. They've established partnerships among the Ferguson-Florissant school district, the Department of Conservation and several local conservation organizations to restore Little Creek's forests and remove honeysuckle and other invasive species from the area. This year they will conduct a watershed project with the Environmental Protection Agency to address erosion problems in Little Creek. The teachers look to make the Little Creek restoration a community-wide effort. Local residents and companies can call 314-831-7386 for information about visiting, volunteering and sponsoring programs at Little Creek.

Rock Shelter

Don't disturb or destroy rocks on glades.

Missourians who move large rocks in glades have the same impact on wildlife that home-destroying tornados have on people. Herping, or nature viewing for amphibians and reptiles, is growing in popularity, but far too often includes activities that cause the deaths of the animals or leaves them without suitable habitat.

The cool, moist conditions, or microhabitats, that result from rocks sitting on the ground, undisturbed for long periods of time, provide shelter and breeding places for many amphibians and reptiles. Nature viewers who displace or destroy large rocks to see the animals beneath make the habitat unusable for many species. Even the good intentions of nature viewers who attempt to return rocks to their original locations can cause problems. Animals sometimes are crushed when heavy rocks are dropped on them, and often lizard eggs are exposed to predators due to slight changes in the positions of the rocks.

When viewing reptiles and amphibians, as with other wildlife, it's best to leave behind only footsteps. Do not chase, touch or feed animals or disturb or destroy their habitat.

A Conservation Nature Center is a great place to get close-up views of amphibians and reptiles. Throughout the year CNCs have animals on display and educational programs about wildlife.





Weekly Fishing Reports

Sign up to receive e-mails about fishing conditions.

Find out how the fish are biting in Missouri waters by signing up for the Department of Conservation statewide weekly fishing report. The report covers more than 60 areas. It includes information about water conditions, most active fish species, angler success and the most effective baits,



lures and strategies. It is distributed by e-mail every Thursday, April through September. To subscribe, simply submit your e-mail address at www.MissouriConservation.org/4183.

Share the Experience

Mentor a novice turkey hunter this spring.

Many hunters say some of their best outdoor memories are of times when they took a friend or family member hunting for the first time. The new Apprentice Hunter Authorization will give experienced turkey hunters greater opportunities to mentor novices this month. It allows novice hunters ages 16 and older, who are not hunter education certified, to buy firearms hunting permits. Authorization holders must hunt in the immediate presence of a licensed hunter age 21 or older, who is hunter education certified. The exemption from the hunter education



training requirement is valid for two consecutive years, but an Authorization must be purchased each year. More details

about the authorizations are available at www.MissouriConservation.org/7498.

Turkey Hunting

Scout it Out



Area Name: Edward Anderson Conservation Area

Location: Located 11 miles south of Hannibal on the Little Dixie National Scenic Byway, Highway 79 and approximately 20 miles north of Louisiana, Mo. Use the Dupont CA boat ramp to reach Edward Anderson CA by boat.

For more info: General information on the spring turkey season is also available online at www.MissouriConservation.org/7498.



TURKEY HUNTING AT Edward Anderson Conservation Area is not for those who want a leisurely walk through the woods, but hardy hunters who want a good shot at bringing home a gobbler will love the area.

Located about 11 miles south of Hannibal, the 1,046-acre Edward Anderson CA is chock-full of turkeys. Its natural features include steep river hills with breathtaking views of the Mississippi River and rich bottomland forests. The ridges that overlook the river are good places to hunt. Be prepared for a rugged hike to get there, as walk-in and river access are the only ways to reach the interior of the CA. Patience and flexibility are key to a successful turkey hunt at Edward Anderson. You will hear turkeys call from virtually every direction, but calling them into range might be difficult, so you must be willing to move closer to where the birds are located.

In addition to great hunting, Edward Anderson CA is great for birdwatching, testing your skills at tree identification and hiking. In October it's ideal for viewing fall color.



Attention Bird Lovers

Get a special glimpse of American white pelicans.

Missouri nature viewers can enjoy a special treat this month. American white pelicans will migrate through the state. The birds use our rivers, lakes and ponds to rest and eat. Fountain Grove Conservation Area and Swan Lake National Wildlife Refuge, near the town of Sumner in north central Missouri, are good places to view the massive birds.

Averaging 10-to-17 pounds, with an 8-to-9 ½ foot wingspan, American white pelicans are an impressive sight. The bird's large pinkish or yellow-orange bill basically serves as a fishnet. The bill holds the soft throat or gular tissue that stretches to become a pouch when the bird is fishing. Equally impressive is the amount of food they consume: about 3 pounds per day. Several pelicans might fish cooperatively, moving into a circle to concentrate fish. They gather food by scooping up large quantities of water and small fish. The water trapped in the pouch slowly drains, leaving the fish for the bird to eat.

The spring migration period is a great time to beef up your birding list. View the Department of Conservation Web site www.MissouriConservation.org/8167 for tips on birding tools and good birding locations.



Spring Sing

Listen for northern spring peeper calls.

On warm nights this month, treat yourself to a natural concert under the stars. Visit small fishless ponds to hear northern spring peepers call. Their high-pitched, peeping call is a true announcement of spring.

The northern spring peeper is a small treefrog. It is pinkish, gray or light tan with a dark X-mark on the back and averages from ¾-to-1 ¼ inch in head-body length. The woodland species lives near ponds, streams and swamps where there is thick undergrowth. Spring peepers are active from late winter to late fall.

FEATHERED FASCINATION

Egg Size and Color



IF YOU EXAMINED the eggs laid by 10 different birds you likely would find 10 different types of eggs. Bird eggs come in a large variety of colors and sizes. The variations are important to the survival of bird species.

From pure white to almost black, bird eggs come in a wide array of colors. Color often helps protect eggs from predators. Birds that lay eggs on the ground often have speckled eggs that blend in with the habitat. Birds that lay eggs that are blue or green often nest in trees and shrubs where dappled sunlight makes it difficult for predators to spot their eggs. The eggs of cavity nesting birds often are white. Ornithologists theorize that the brightness of the eggs helps the parents easily locate their nests.

The size of an egg is based in part on the size of the bird laying the egg. Egg size also depends on how developed the baby bird will be once it comes out. If the species of bird tends to be more developed at hatching, the eggs tend to be larger because they contain more yolk to grow the bird embryo to a larger size.



River Cleanups

Help keep the 'great' in Missouri's great rivers.

Volunteer cleanups on the Missouri River span the state this year. You can sign up at www.riverrelief.org.

- April 26 in Boone County at the Hartsburg Access.
- June 14 in Franklin County at the Washington City Access.
- Sept. 13 in St. Louis County at Columbia Bottom Conservation Area.
- Oct. 4 in Kansas City, location to be announced.

Missouri River Relief and its partners provide work gloves, trash bags, lunch and cleanup supplies. For more information, e-mail riverrelief@riverrelief.org, or call 573-443-0292.



Scrub That Tub!

Take action to protect our waters.

If you have been putting off routine boat maintenance, zebra mussels are a great incentive to stop procrastinating. The invasive Eurasian clams can damage motors by clogging water intakes. Their presence on boat hulls creates drag, reducing fuel efficiency. If that isn't enough reason to check for zebra mussels, remember

that the fingernail-sized bivalves also can create ecological havoc, cover beaches with sharp shells and foul-smelling debris and add millions of dollars to utility bills by requiring costly prevention and removal from water and electric company equipment. To avoid this:

- Inspect your boat's submerged surfaces and scrape off any visible zebra mussels.
- Drain water from live wells, bait buckets, motors and other parts of your boat before leaving a body of water.
- Rinse boat, trailer and other equipment at a car wash before moving to new areas.
- Learn what to look for by visiting www.MissouriConservation.org/8260 or by writing to MDC, Zebra Mussels: Missouri's Most Unwanted, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102 or e-mail pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov.

Stream Team



Anglers of Missouri



THE ANGLERS OF Missouri originated in the early 1940s, soon after formation of the Conservation Department. Legendary conservationist Marlin Perkins was a member, and the group has always advocated

for aquatic resources. They own 50 acres along the Bourbeuse River in Franklin County. Their commitment to stream cleanups dates back to 1985, when they hosted one of the first picnics in conjunction with Operation Clean Stream, the state's longest-running stream cleanup event. They have conducted cleanups on their own stretch of river since 1993. As the amount of trash they found dwindled, they took up water-quality monitoring and now have Level I testing certification. "Missouri Stream Team brings people together," said team leader Dan Adams. "We are one huge team, basically. You may not know the guys from other ends of the state, but we are doing pretty much the same things."

Stream Team Number: 439

Date formed: Oct. 15, 1993

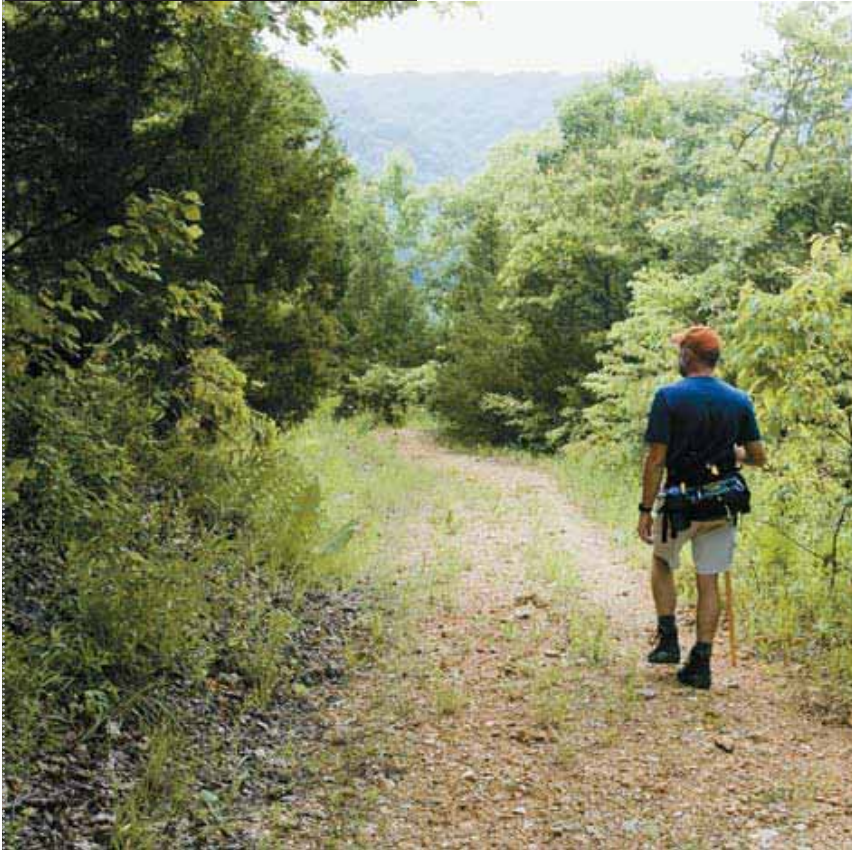
Location: Bourbeuse River

For more info about Stream Teams: www.mostreamteam.org



Our Glorious Forests

LITTLE LOST CREEK CA



Size: 2,899 acres

Location: In Warren County, 5 miles south of Pendleton on Route B.

Highlights: Little Lost Creek is a forested area with scattered glades, savannas and fields.

Aside from hunting, recreational opportunities include scenic viewing, primitive camping, picnic tables, bird watching and a 5-mile, multi-use trail.

Find more info: www.MissouriConservation.org/a8030



LITTLE LOST CREEK Conservation Area is rich in both natural and cultural history. A partially spring-fed Ozark stream, Little Lost Creek accounts for much of the area's natural diversity. It is home to brilliantly colored Ozark fish species, such as bleeding shiners, Southern red belly dace and stippled darters. Deep valleys feature intermittent

waterfalls, chutes and outcrops of St. Peter sandstone, which support numerous fern species. Woodland wildlife, such as deer, turkey, squirrels and ruffed grouse, are year-round residents. Management activities such as forest thinning and prescribed fire ensure a continuing diversity of quality wildlife habitat. The area is steeped in history. Artifacts found in and around some of the fields indicate that several tribes of Native Americans might have hunted in the area. Daniel Boone homesteaded a few miles southeast of Little Lost Creek, and it is likely that he hunted game here.

Arbor Day

Planting a tree is a great way to celebrate.

A good way to celebrate Missouri's Arbor Day, April 4, and National Arbor Day, April 25, is to plant a tree. But before you buy, visit www.MissouriConservation.org/15884. There you will find help selecting the right trees for your growing situation, as well as guidance about putting them in the right place and planting them correctly. Starting with species that will thrive in your growing conditions and placing them appropriately will ensure healthy trees and years of benefits to your property.



We All Live in a Forest

Celebrate spring, tour the state to see flowering trees.

Although we're accustomed to celebrating the annual show of fall color, Missouri's flowering trees of spring deserve as much fanfare. The sight of redbuds and plum blossoms can banish the last of your winter blues. All trees produce flowers, but only a few of our native trees are showy enough to attract attention. These are serviceberry, Eastern redbud, wild plum, wild crab, red buckeye, flowering dogwood and hawthorn. Their peak of bloom moves from south to north and from lower to higher elevation as the average daily temperature rises. A good time to take a driving tour to view these trees is during the last two weeks of April. But any time from now through June, you can look for this parade of showy woodland trees.





Seed Buyers Beware!

Don't mistakingly purchase the nastiest weed in Missouri.

One lespedeza is a nitrogen-rich, native prairie legume. Livestock relish it, and game birds prize its seeds. The second lespedeza is an aggressive invader. It's high in tannins and turns woody by midsummer, so cattle won't eat it. The first is *lespedeza capitata*, or round-headed bush clover; the



second is non-native *sericea lespedeza*. Don't accidentally "improve" your pastures with it! Learn to identify and control *sericea lespedeza* at

www.MissouriConservation.org/7764—and make sure to buy native lespedezas from reputable sources.

Seed for CP-25 Contracts

MNSA's products help rare and declining habitats.

If you're restoring native prairie or implementing the CRP practice known as "Rare and Declining Habitats," you'll appreciate the Missouri Native Seed Association. It has cooperated with the Missouri Crop Improvement Association to develop standards for Missouri source-identified native seed. These certified "Missouri born and raised" native seeds are adapted to local soils, climate and wildlife. Another term for this match between local plants, soils and wildlife is "local ecotype."

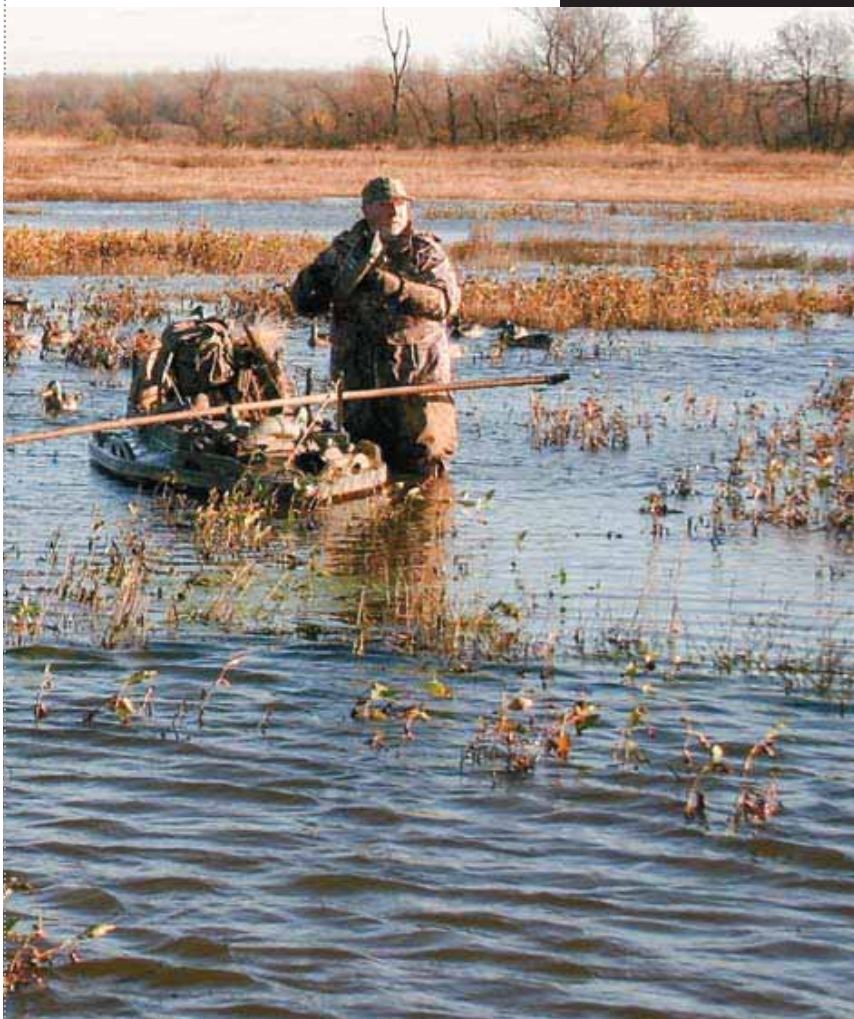
Seeds from your local ecotype are more likely to produce diverse plant and animal communities—and protect your investment of time and money—than seed grown in other regions. To find seed, visit

www.GrowNative.org, and click on "Buyer's Guide." Ask for seed that carries the yellow MCIA source-identified seed tag.



Begin Slow Draw-Down of Wetlands

On the Ground



A NATURAL WETLAND loses and regains water as seasons and weather change. The nine owners of Massasauga Flats, a private wetland near Meadville, strive to emulate this natural ebb and flow.

"Most people make the mistake of draining their wetland too fast or too early," says George Seek, one of the Flats' owners and a former wetland manager for the Department. The key, he says, is to keep the soil moist with slow draw-downs throughout late spring and summer. This technique, called moist-soil management, mimics natural wetland cycles, and managers use it to create diverse habitat for wetland plants and animals.

"In many cases," George says, "once you drain the top third of a wetland, Mother Nature will do the rest through evaporation. Go slow and you'll see better wetland habitat and fantastic hunting in the fall."

For more details about practicing slow draw-down on your wetland acres, visit www.MissouriConservation.org/7825.



Fun With Family and Friends

Register now for one of the Wonders of Wildlife Schools.

Want to have more fun outdoors this year? Learn more about natural Missouri and increase your outdoor skills at one of five W.O.W. Schools scheduled throughout the state. Cosponsored by a number of businesses, nonprofits and state agencies, including the Missouri departments of Conservation and Natural Resources, the W.O.W. National Outdoor Recreation and Conservation Schools cover outdoor skills, conservation, safety and ethics. Designed for people of all ages, W.O.W. Schools offer families in particular a great opportunity to share quality time together. Participants can choose from several different course topics for both the beginner and experienced outdoor enthusiast. In 2008, you'll find W.O.W. Schools at the following places and dates: in Springfield April 25–26, in Columbia May 2–3, in St. Louis June 6–7, in Kansas City Sept. 26–27 and in Roaring River State Park Oct. 10–12. For more information or to register, call 1-877-245-9453 or check out the W.O.W. Web site at WondersOfWildlife.org.



Rain Gardens

Create a refuge for frogs, birds and dragonflies.

The average Missouri roof sheds tens of thousands of gallons of water a year. Where does all this runoff go? Into local stormwater systems, often stressed already by road and parking lot runoff. You can ease the stress on local stormwater systems by diverting your roof runoff into a rain garden. Our free publication, *Native Plant Rain Gardens*, shows you how to use these miniature wetlands to soak up water and create wildlife habitat. To get it, write to MDC, *Native Plant Rain Gardens*, PO Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, or e-mail pubstaff@mdc.mo.gov.

NATURE ACTIVITY



Going Frog Wild

FROGS ARE MORE than cute little pond critters. They enhance our world in countless ways, providing biomedicines, helping control pests and indicating unsafe environmental conditions. Unfortunately, the planet is losing its frog species at an alarming rate.

To help Missourians learn about amphibians, the threats they face and how to conserve them, the Department has joined an international effort to celebrate 2008 as the Year of the Frog. Check out these frog programs scheduled for April. Twin Pines Conservation Education Center in Shannon County goes "Frog Wild for a Hoppy Summer" April 5. The Discovery Center in Jackson County goes "Frog Wild" April 12. On April 18, Department herpetologist Jeff Briggler leads the search for chorus frogs at Forest 44 in St. Louis County. Burr Oak Woods' reading program, in Jackson County, hops into frogs April 19, and it holds a survey of breeding frog calls May 2.

Program: Various "frog-wild" activities at nature and interpretive centers around the state

Who should come: Families and friends with children

Dates and Locations: Check www.MissouriConservation.org/4163 for the full list of frog programs and to see which events require reservations.



Decoying SPRING Turkeys

Lure turkeys into the fields,
exactly where you want them.

BY MARK GOODWIN

DAVID STONER



NOPPADOL PAKTHONG

Twenty minutes had passed since the tom gobbled on the ridge in front of us. Alert and facing the ridge, my youth hunter, Tyler Carr, and I sat at the base of a red oak. Rain the night before had dampened the leaves. Hearing a turkey approach would be difficult.

We had arranged a decoy spread—two hens and a jake—behind us in the pasture field to draw the attention of turkeys that might approach from that direction. Moments passed. I caught movement to my right. At 20 yards, five jakes popped over the ridge to our right and ran, half strutting, to our decoys.

“Don’t move,” I whispered to Tyler. “We’ve got five jakes in our decoys. When I tell you, turn around and tag one of those birds.”

To aim at one of the jakes, Tyler would have to move 180 degrees. I watched the young gobblers and read their body language. Nervous and alert, the jakes stood tall with stretched necks, waiting for pecking-order confrontations from their new company—the decoys.

Decoys can be an effective tool when turkey hunting, if used correctly.

When none developed, the jakes started to relax. One began preening its back feathers; another pecked at a blade of grass. When the jakes all turned their backs to us, I whispered to Tyler to make his move. He made a smooth 180-degree turn and aimed carefully at the jake on the far right. The jakes caught his movement but stood where they were with stretched necks. At the shot, Tyler’s jake tumbled.

Without the distraction offered by our decoys, it’s unlikely this hunt would have ended with Tyler bagging one of those jakes.

Turkey decoys have proven their worth in many hunting situations, but they are not a cure-all. Their effectiveness hinges on when, where and how they are used. Sometimes they are almost essential; other times they can be a hindrance or, worse, a safety hazard.

Safety First

When you’re hunting ducks over a spread of decoys, there’s a remote chance another hunter might slip in and shoot at one of your decoys



with you in the line of fire. When using decoys to hunt turkeys, however, particularly if you include a jake or a gobbler in your decoy spread, there is a greater chance that could happen.

You can all but eliminate that danger by following some common-sense rules.

- **Never use turkey decoys in timber.** Use decoys only in open fields that allow you a broad field of view—at least 100 yards. This allows you to spot and immediately speak to any hunter who might approach and mistake your turkey decoys for the real thing. When you're in the timber, a hunter might approach from any direction, making decoy use too dangerous.

Besides, you don't need turkey decoys in the timber. Veteran timber hunters set up to call with a hill or a bend in the terrain between them and the turkey. This forces the turkey to come in blind. When a turkey first steps into view, it is in shooting range. No need for decoys.

- **Always sit against a tree that is as broad or broader than your shoulders.** This protects you from hunters who might approach your decoy spread from behind you.

- **Never use decoys on heavily hunted public ground.** The chances are too great that your decoy spread will attract other hunters.

- **Never be on the move while holding decoys in your hand.** Always stow them in a carrying bag.

- **Use and wear hunter orange, whether or not you are using decoys.** Wear a hunter orange cap or vest when on the move, and hang it on a limb close to your position when you set up to hunt with camo headnet, hat and gloves. The hunter orange will not alert turkeys, but it will alert other hunters to your presence.

WHAT TO BUY

Major outdoor equipment retailers usually carry a variety of turkey decoys. Foldable models are easiest to carry afield, and decoy sets that consist of two hens and a jake are most versatile. Though a decoy spread may cost more than \$50, the effectiveness of the decoys makes them well worth the price, especially since you can use them over and over.





DAVID STONER

Several types of decoys are available from most major outdoor equipment stores.

Decoys in Open Fields

In spring, gobblers spend a lot of time in fields. The open terrain offers gobblers a prime place to strut and attract hens. The fields are also full of bugs and fresh greens for the turkeys to eat.

Because toms have practically everything they need in fields, including the ability to see danger from all directions, luring them into shotgun range is a tough task.

Decoys go a long way toward evening the odds. But you won't do much good just sticking them out in any field and waiting for gobblers to show up. Using decoys successfully requires careful preparation and strategy.

Effective Scouting

Scouting will help you determine where best to place your decoys in a field setup. But, a few trips out listening for gobblers a month before the season starts won't give you current information. Gobblers haven't yet established the patterns that will hold when the season opens.

It's best to scout the week before the season opens, when toms are on the patterns that will continue into the season. Two or three scouting trips are often all it takes to figure out their routines.

THE JAKE/HEN COMBO

A few years back, some hunters discovered that setting out a jake decoy, along with a hen decoy or two, works better than just hen decoys alone. The jake decoy pulls on a gobbler's sense of dominance in his area and often brings him in when hens alone wouldn't.

Put the jake decoy close to where you want a gobbler to stand just before you squeeze the trigger, for a gobbler will often approach to within inches—face to face—of a jake decoy.

Do your best not to spook the birds you plan to hunt. When scouting, get to your spot well before first light, sit down and wait for the morning routine to start. Don't call to toms. It is exciting to have gobblers answer your calls, but your calling might pull them off their morning routine. Worse, you could call them in and spook them.

Most scouting trips take little more than an hour. Listen to toms gobble from the roost. When they pitch to the ground, track their movements by their gobbling and note the route they take to get to the field they are using as a strutting area. Then leave the area in a direction that minimizes the chance of toms seeing you and spooking.

Again, your focus in scouting the week before the season is patterning how a tom is getting to a field, so you will know where best to set your decoys. If you know where along a field edge a gobbler has been entering, you can place your decoys in the field exactly where you would like the gobbler to stand when you are ready to take your shot.

Decoy Placement

The ideal range for a clean shot on a gobbler with most 12-gauge, full-choke shotguns is 25 yards. At this distance, a shot pattern is dense enough for a clean shot, but the pattern will have expanded enough to catch a tom if your aim is less than true. To establish this range, set up to call 5 yards off the field in the woods, and place the decoys 20 yards out in the field.

Make sure you have a clear field of fire. Use hand trimmers to clear a shooting lane to

your decoys. Not too much, though. Cut brush down to 12 inches high in your shooting lane. That will still leave a screen of brush to hide your form.

Try to set up so that you are in the shadows. If the sun shines directly on you, you'll have a hard time seeing birds, and they'll be more likely to spot you.

Be an Early Bird

When hunting fields, make sure you set up your decoys early. Get to the field well before you see even a hint of dawn breaking in the east. Your scouting will have given you an idea of when it gets light. Get there earlier when the skies are clear.

An early arrival allows turkeys time to forget any sounds you've made while setting up. Frequently, gobblers roost close to field edges, and the unnatural sounds of stake against decoy and the rustling of decoys can alert toms, even in the dark. Given time, and the cover of darkness to mask the source, they will forget the unnatural sounds by daybreak.

Patience

Maybe you have read about running and gunning for gobblers—covering lots of ground and calling in an attempt to make a turkey gobble. It works sometimes, but more often than not it spooks turkeys. It's best to stay put, even if you don't hear toms gobbling. The longer you sit, the longer you give a gobbler a chance to approach your decoy spread.

Call every 20 minutes or so. To help you stay put, bring food and drink. Bring a book to read. Doze. Do whatever it takes to remain at your decoy setup. You've done your scouting. You know toms have been using your area. What have you to gain by leaving your decoy setup and walking around?

If a tom enters your field, snubs your decoys and walks off in the opposite direction, it might work to try to circle and set up in front of him, particularly if the terrain is in your favor. Often, however, you'll just spook the tom, plus you might miss out on a silent tom approaching your position. Turkey decoys are great hunting tools, but they do require patience. ▲

Decoys should be set in a clearing approximately 25 feet away for a clean shot.

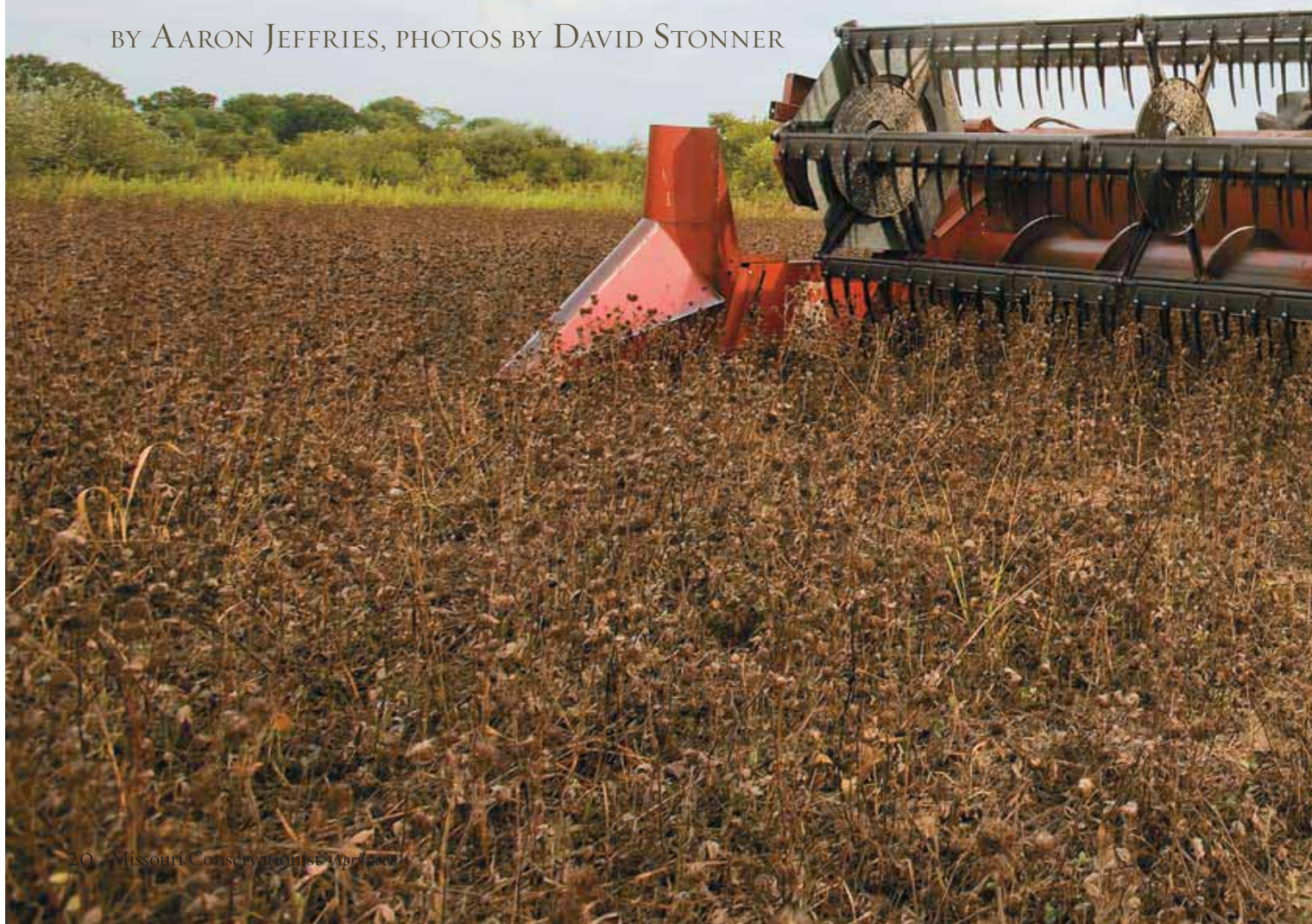


A Helping **HAND**

The Conservation
Department teams
with farmers to
improve wildlife
habitat on
conservation areas.

on Public **LAND**

BY AARON JEFFRIES, PHOTOS BY DAVID STONNER





DICK SNYDER PULLS INTO A PARKING LOT AT the Poosey Conservation Area in Livingston County. Although it is a beautiful spring morning, he's not here to hunt or fish. He's here to work. Dick opens the gate and quickly jumps into the cab of his tractor. Rain is in the forecast, and he still has 150 acres of soybeans to plant and even more to plant back home.

Dick Snyder is just one of more than 360 Missouri farmers who contract to farm approximately 68,000 acres of land from the Department of Conservation for raising crops, grazing, and hay and seed collection. As they work the land, these farmers also help the Department improve wildlife habitat and maintain areas for the benefit of the public.

Farming and Wildlife

A full-time farmer who currently raises corn, soybeans and wheat on more than 3,000 acres in Livingston County, Dick has been permittee farmer at the Poosey

Dick Snyder helps farm the Poosey Conservation Area with his son, Jason. He is one of three permittee farmers on the conservation area.

Conservation Area since the early 1980s. That's when he saw an advertisement in the local newspaper and successfully bid to farm cropland at the area.

One of three permittee farmers at Poosey, Dick farms 535 acres of cropland on the area. As part of his contract, he also plants sunflower and grain plots and leaves a percentage of the crop unharvested.

Dick said one of the biggest challenges about farming on a conservation area has been working with small fields. The Department maintains small crop fields because they provide better habitat for wildlife like quail and rabbits than large, expansive fields.

"It was hard to get equipment into some fields," Dick said, "but the Department has helped out by constructing larger field crossings and openings on the area."

A combination of row crops, field borders, fallow fields and shrub thickets provide excellent habitat for quail, rabbits and songbirds. The area manager at Poosey depends on permittees to keep farmable land in production.

"We couldn't plant all the crop fields and food plots and maintain the area without their help," said Phil Sneed, a Department resource forester who, along with three other





Department staff, work with permittee farmers on the area.

The team also manages several other conservation areas and works with private landowners in 10 counties.

At the Whetstone and Reform conservation areas in Callaway County, Eugene "Butch" Richards has been contract farming 1,300 acres of cropland for three years. He also farms an additional 600 acres of private cropland.

Butch, who has been farming near Tebbetts since 1978, feels the real benefit to farming on conservation areas comes from being able to do extra work on the areas to offset some of the contract costs. Butch regularly plants food plots and sprays and disks fields to reduce his annual payment.

"The extra work really helps me with my cash flow at certain times of the year," he said. "It's just a good trade-off. I benefit and the Department benefits."

Butch's helper, George Burre, said he likes the fact that there are so many people hunting, fishing or just enjoying the conservation areas.

"When I'm on the area, people always ask me where to deer or quail hunt," he said.

Farmers like Eugene "Butch" Richards help improve wildlife habitat and maintain areas for the benefit of the public when they contract land from the Department.

HELPING PRIVATE LANDOWNERS

In 1999, the Missouri Department of Conservation created the Private Land Services Division, which is dedicated to assisting Missouri landowners achieve their natural resource goals.

Private land conservationists and other resource professionals provide technical assistance, on-site visits, detailed conservation plans, and the latest information on cost-share programs to landowners.

In 2006, the Private Land Services Division made nearly 40,000 contacts with Missouri landowners. The Department also administers a private landowner assistance program that provides approximately \$1 million in cost-share to Missouri landowners. Visit www.MissouriConservation.org/14140 and click on your county to find your local private land conservationist.



MDC wildlife management biologist Chris Freeman (left) with farmers Marty Bryan (center) and Travis Matthews at Grand Pass Conservation Area.

Farming for Ducks

At Grand Pass Conservation Area in northwest Saline County, three permittee farmers are helping the Conservation Department manage the area for all sorts of wildlife, but primarily for waterfowl and other migratory species.

Travis and Hoss Matthews from Norborne have been farming about 360 acres on the area since 2004, when they learned about the contract ground in the local newspaper. The Matthews brothers farm an additional 5,500 acres along the Missouri River.

Travis says it was a challenge to figure out how to bid on the extra work in the contract, but it's definitely worth it.

"Leaving the unharvested grain and planting food plots really helps us get down the cash rent we owe," he explained.

Marty Bryan has been farming on Grand Pass since the early 1980s, and his dad farmed the area before then. Marty and his family are from the Marshall area and farm about 2,000 acres in Saline County. They also run a fertilizer-spreading and grain-elevator business, or as Marty says, "a little bit of everything."

This year, Marty planted about 780 acres of corn and soybeans on the Grand Pass area. He also planted sunflower and food plots as a part of his contract. He said timing is everything at a wetland area.

"In the spring, we have to get the sunflowers in early enough so they will be ready by dove season," he said. "In the fall, we have to get our crops out early enough so the guys can start flooding the fields for the ducks. Sometimes it can get pretty hectic around here, but we can always call the guys if we have questions."

By "the guys," Travis means wildlife management biologist Chris Freeman and wildlife biologist Robert Henry.

BIDDING FOR SUCCESS

The Conservation Department rents land through a bidding process. Area managers solicit bids for the acres to be rented by advertising in local newspapers. Phil Sneed, resource forester in the northwest region, said the number of farmers submitting bids for an area depends on the location, size, shape and productivity of the fields.

Farmers may also agree to complete other services for the Department, such as planting food plots, spraying fields, light disking of idle areas and mowing. These extra services are clearly spelled out in the bidding phase and in the actual contract.

This extra work helps the Department by freeing up staff to work on other projects, and it helps farmers save money by reducing the amount of annual rent they owe to the Department. Farmers must determine the value of the extra projects when submitting their bid.

"We couldn't plant all the crop fields and food plots and maintain the area without their help."

—PHIL SNEED,
MDC RESOURCE FORESTER

During the fall harvest, Robert often rides in the combine to show where corn should be left standing.

"We have to be precise on where we leave the standing corn," Robert said. "That way when we flood the field we have water in the unharvested grain, a place for hunters to hide and a dependable food source for ducks and geese."

Prairie Partners

In southwest Missouri, The Conservation Department has contracts with native seed companies to harvest native grass and wildflower seeds.

Contracts to harvest seed from native prairies also result from a competitive bidding process. The Department receives a portion of the harvested seed, which is then used to restore prairie on other conservation areas.

David Darrow, a wildlife management biologist in southwest Missouri, said, "Seed collection by permittees is helping protect our remaining tallgrass prairie. ... Over the past four years we have received around 600 pounds of native grass and wildflower seed [annually]. This seed alone will plant about 60 acres of new prairie per year."

David also works with Wes Spinks, who has leased land on conservation areas for grazing for the past seven years. The contract Wes has with the Conservation Department allows him to graze certain grasslands between April 15 and Aug. 15. The two communicate regularly about the condition of the cows, fencing problems and how much grass is left.

David said grazing by cows ends up being a great tool for prairie chicken and quail management.

Whether by planting and harvesting crops, grazing, seed collection or completing extra services, such as leaving unharvested grain, planting food plots or spraying fields, permittee farmers play a critical role in helping area managers keep conservation areas attractive to people and wildlife. ▲

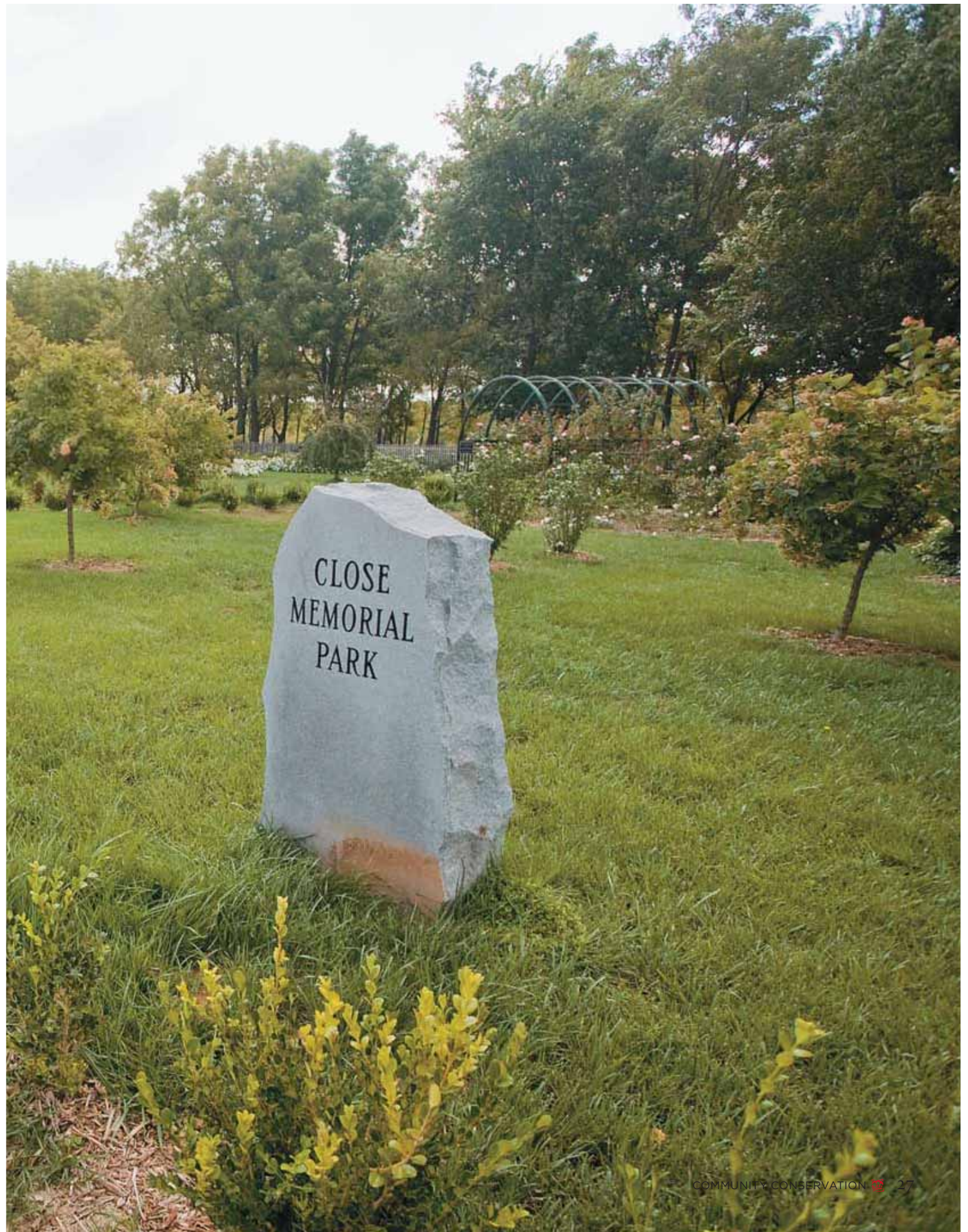
A photograph of a paved path in a park. The path is light-colored and curves to the right. On the right side of the path, there is a row of green bushes. In the background, there are trees with green and yellow leaves, suggesting autumn. A person is walking away from the camera on the path. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Close MEMORIAL Park

This Springfield arboretum's attractions are education and serenity.

by Francis Skalicky, photos by Noppadol Paothong

BLOOMING FLOWERS AND ORNAMENTAL shrubs greet visitors at the parking lot of Close Memorial Park and lead them away from Springfield's urban bustle. A paved path takes them to Anne Drummond Lake, where calming views of swimming waterfowl and perhaps a great blue heron wading at the well-manicured lake's far end help visitors unwind from the day's tensions.





Members of the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, (from left) Major Close, Bob Childress, George Dietz and Paul Redfern, also volunteer their time to help maintain the arboretum.

The 54-acre park offers more than relaxation and escape, however. This city-owned park also serves as an arboretum, so it's a great place to learn about the trees of Missouri.

Arboretums are places where many varieties of trees and shrubs are grown for exhibition or study. The primary purpose of the arboretum at Close Park is to educate visitors about the tree species that have called Missouri home since pre-settlement days. Many of the native species growing there are marked with signs providing information about the tree's characteristics, preferred habitats and, in some cases, historical uses.

"People are always asking questions about trees," said C. Major Close, son of the park's namesake—Cephas Major Close—and an active volunteer at the arboretum. "They can come here [to the park] and this tells them something about trees."

A sign by a shagbark hickory in the north part of the park, for example, reveals that this species was once used for wagon-wheel spokes and hubs. A sign accompanying a broad-trunked shingle oak tucked away on the east end of Close Park

tells visitors how our pioneer forefathers commonly used these trees as a source of shingles for their buildings.

Not every sign gives a history lesson; one can also learn about the diversity of Missouri's forested terrain. Seventeen types of oak trees native to Missouri are represented at the arboretum. All the information together tells the important story of Missouri's landscape.

"A lot of our history is coming through in this arboretum," said Springfield-Greene County Director of Parks Jodie Adams. "It's important that we never lose focus of the native resources that truly developed our park lands and our natural areas. The arboretum is a very important part of our parks system."

NATIVE TREE COLLECTION

The arboretum contains more than 60 native species, some of which are represented by more than one tree and a lesser number of non-native ornamentals. The precise number of trees at the park fluctuates due to ongoing plantings and natural losses, like those that resulted from the January 2007 ice storm.

"I do not know of another city park in this part of the state that has a designated collection of native trees planted and identified," said Cindy Garner, a Missouri Department of Conservation urban forester who works in the agency's 17-county Southwest Region. "Even a casual stroll through the park will allow people to learn how to identify Missouri's native trees."

Close Park's arboretum isn't entirely devoted to native trees. It also includes non-native species that are marked by small signs that give the taxonomic and common names of trees, but no other information.

Close Memorial Park, which opened in June, 2001, is a choice site for an arboretum. At the time of its purchase in the mid-1990s, the site already had a number of mature trees, good soil

and plenty of water in the form of the pond and a small stream that trickles across the area.

It also enjoys a good location. Close Park adjoins Nathaniel Greene Park, a city-owned 60-acre park with a number of amenities and events that draw thousands of visitors to the site each year. Close Park also is dissected by the South Creek/Wilson's Creek Greenways Trail, a recreational route that brings a large number of joggers, cyclists and walkers through the site.

The Close Family Foundation assisted the Springfield-Greene County Parks Department in acquiring the land. Early in the project, Close came up with the idea for an arboretum.

"I was working closely with Cindy Jobe from the Park Board," Close recalled. "I remember she had a book that had something about Missouri trees. I looked at that and saw that we had a certain amount of native trees out there already. I thought 'Well, why don't we just continue that collection.' And it's grown from that."

The Missouri Department of Conservation assisted with the arboretum's development with a \$10,000 grant that covered the costs of planting 57 native trees and adding permanent signage next to the trees and at the park's entrance. The grant also paid for the removal of dead trees and for the proper trimming of existing trees.

Justine Gartner, the Missouri Department of Conservation's forestry field program supervisor, said it was money well spent.

MDC urban forester Cindy Garner (left) helps plant a tree at Close Memorial Park.

Helping Trees

Just as Missouri's highly successful Stream Team program has brought increased attention to the state's waterways, Forest ReLeaf of Missouri is helping to improve the state's forests.

This program, which is administered in Missouri through the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Missouri Community Forestry Council, encourages volunteers to become actively involved in caring for the state's trees. It has five primary goals:

1. To raise public awareness of the need for tree planting.
2. To facilitate community dialogue and action based upon needs identified through accepted forestry practices.
3. To initiate tree plantings in Missouri and elsewhere that will supplement regular plantings and involve public and private organizations and individuals.
4. To improve existing community forests and trees by promoting the proper care of trees.
5. To address forestry objectives identified through partnerships with the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Missouri Community Forestry Council.

To get information on how to get involved with Forest ReLeaf of Missouri, contact your regional Missouri Department of Conservation office (see page 3) or log onto www.moreleaf.org.



"An arboretum like the one at Close Park gives Missourians the opportunity to look at and enjoy trees that they may not have been exposed to otherwise," she said. "Such efforts are a great way to promote little-known trees that would be wonderful plants for a yard or landscape."

"For those who are interested in tree identification, an arboretum is a wonderful outdoor classroom that can test your knowledge or help you learn about new plants," Gartner said.

PARTNERSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERS

The arboretum at Close Park demonstrates the importance of partnerships and citizen volunteers. The arboretum's main partners are the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, the Close Family, the University of Missouri Extension and the Missouri Department of Conservation.

"In general, working together with other organizations helps make a better end product," Gartner said. "Each organization or agency brings a different perspective and a different set of skills and contacts. The synergy which results from a partnership of closely allied groups can have some astounding results."

Adams said the arboretum serves as an example of how valuable volunteers are to an organization.

"If we didn't have volunteers, this wouldn't be a state-of-the-art department," Adams said, referring to the Gold Medal Award the Springfield-Greene County Park Board received from the National Recreation and Park Association in 2000. "We need volunteers so desperately because we can't do all the work with paid personnel."

No duties are too big—or too menial—for those who volunteer countless hours developing the arboretum.

"We help plant trees, we mulch trees, we trim trees—we do whatever needs to be done," Close said. "I'm just the person who does things. I'm not an expert by any means. There are people who know the Latin names of the trees and things of that nature, but that's not me. Those people are specialists. I guess you could say I'm a generalist."

HELP NEEDED!

Specialists and generalists alike are still needed at the park because the arboretum at Close Park is a work in progress. Plantings of more trees are planned as species and funds become available. A botanical center is planned that will not only highlight the arboretum but will also emphasize the floral components of both Close Memorial Park and its next-door neighbor, Nathaniel Greene Park.

Close is also working with several high schools and local universities in Springfield to make the arboretum an educational tool that could be used by area classrooms.

But Close is quick to add that you don't have to be a student to get an education at Close Park's arboretum. Anyone who wants to take time to read the signs can learn more about Missouri's trees.

"You know, we all grow up amongst all these trees, but we don't really know what's out there," he said. "We're hoping to increase the tree education of everyone that goes to the park." ▲

**Close Memorial
Park offers
54 acres of
relaxation
and escape in
addition
to native
Missouri trees.**





PIN OAK

QUERCUS PALUSTRIS

PIN OAK, ONE OF OUR MOST BEAUTIFUL SHADE TREES, IS FOUND THROUGHOUT MISSOURI, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF A FEW OZARK COUNTIES. FLOWERS: MALE AND FEMALE FLOWERS BORNE SEPARATELY ON THE SAME TREE. MALE FLOWERS IN HAIRY CATKINS, 2 TO 3 INCHES LONG. FEMALE ON SHORT, HAIRY STALKS, REDDISH. FRUIT: AN ACORN, SMALL, 1/2 INCH LONG, OFTEN STRIPED WITH DARK LINES, ENCLOSED 1/3 OF THE WAY WITH THIN SAUCER-SHAPED CUPS. THESE ACORNS ARE A FAVORITE OF WATER FOWL IN SWAMPS AND RIVER BORDERS.

TREES PROVIDED BY MO. DEPT. OF CONSERVATION

Hunting and Fishing Calendar

FISHING

Black Bass (certain Ozark streams, see the *Wildlife Code*)

5/24/08 2/28/09

impoundments and other streams year-round

Bullfrogs and Green Frogs Sunset Midnight

6/30/08 10/31/08

Nongame Fish Snagging 3/15/08 5/15/08

Paddlefish 3/15/08 4/30/08

Paddlefish on the Mississippi River 3/15/08 5/15/08

Trout Parks 3/1/08 10/31/08

HUNTING

Coyotes 5/12/08 3/31/09

Crow 11/1/08 3/3/09

Deer

Firearms 11/15/08 to be announced

Groundhog 5/12/08 12/15/08

Rabbits 10/1/08 2/15/09

Squirrels 5/24/08 2/15/09

Turkey

Youth (resident only) 4/12/08 4/13/08

Spring 4/21/08 5/11/08

Light Goose Conservation Order 1/31/08 4/30/08

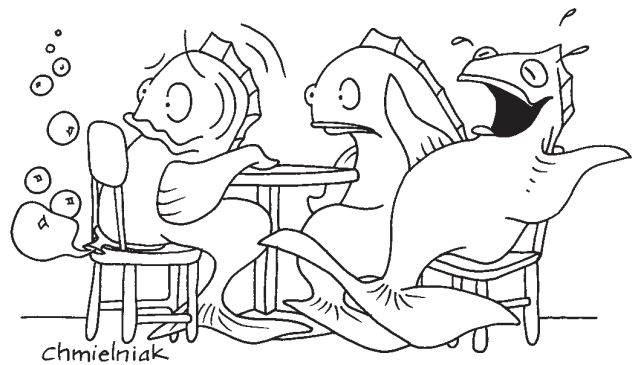
please see the backcover of the *Waterfowl Hunting Digest* or download the PDF at www.MissouriConservation.org/777

For complete information about seasons, limits, methods and restrictions, consult the *Wildlife Code* and the current summaries of *Missouri Hunting and Trapping Regulations* and *Missouri Fishing Regulations*, the *Fall Deer and Turkey Hunting Regulations and Information*, the *Waterfowl Hunting Digest* and the *Migratory Bird Hunting Digest*. For more information visit www.MissouriConservation.org/8707 or permit vendors.

The Department of Conservation's computerized point-of-sale system allows you to purchase or replace your permits through local vendors or by phone. The toll-free number is 800-392-4115. Allow 10 days for delivery of telephone purchases. To purchase permits online go to www.wildlifelicense.com/mo/.



Youth turkey season is April 12 and 13.



A classic April Fool's gag: the fish whoopee cushion.

Contributors



MARK GOODWIN is a lifelong Missouri resident who has spent close to 30 years hunting turkeys in the Ozark foothills of southeast Missouri. Three grandkids are on the way this year, and he is looking forward to passing on the tradition of turkey hunting to these new family members.

AARON JEFFRIES is the upland game coordinator for the Conservation Department. He and his wife, Leslie, live in Jefferson City. They spend their free time chasing sons Nicholas and Ryan. Aaron enjoys hunting, fishing and improving quail habitat.



FRANCIS SKALICKY is a metro media specialist for the Department of Conservation. He has been with the Department for 12 years. He and his wife, Michele, live in Springfield with their two daughters, Anna, 8, and Kate, 7. Also vying for attention in the Skalicky household are two dogs, two cats, two fish and two mice.

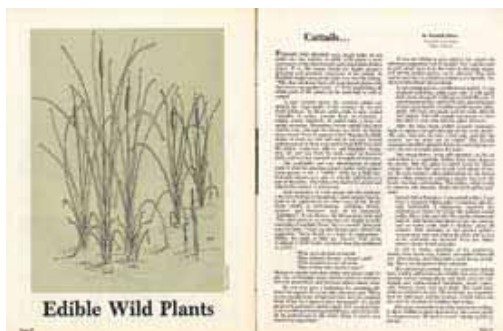
TIME CAPSULE

April 1978

Edible Wild Plants by Wendell

Jeffery highlights the parts of a cattail that can be eaten either cooked or raw. The common cattail was labeled "supermarket of the swamps" by the late Euell Gibbons. Its pollen can be used for pancake flour; its rootstock, a starchy potato substitute; its bloom spikes make a tasty cooked vegetable; and its peeled stalk, a treat "not unlike cucumber." American Indians named this plant, "fruit for papoose's bed" due to the fluffy masses of seeds that do not mat and are very soft. During WWII the seeds of the cattail were used for making pillows, mattresses, life jackets and baseballs. The seeds were also used for weaving materials, meal for livestock feeds, oils, insulation and wax.

—Contributed by the Circulation staff



AGENT NOTES

Have a burning question? Contact your regional Conservation office.

ONE AFTERNOON WHILE patrolling a conservation area, I found a trash pile that recently had been dumped at the edge of a parking lot. After checking another portion of the area, I drove back to the parking lot. This time the trash pile was on fire, and a car was leaving the lot. I talked to the two people in the car and found that the driver lit the trash pile for no justifiable reason. I cited the person for Negligent Burning.

Any fire is the responsibility of the person who starts it. Negligent Burning is the act of causing damage to the property of another by fire or explosion through criminal negligence. You are guilty of this Class B Misdemeanor if you throw a burning cigarette from a car window and it starts a grass fire. You are also guilty if your burning brush pile, campfire or controlled burn escapes and damages property.

Be extremely alert to weather conditions before starting any fire and follow local burn bans. Learn about these and local ordinances pertaining to burning at your local Conservation Department or sheriff's office. Advise your county dispatch center of any controlled burn you plan for your property to prevent an unnecessary response by the fire department. Notify them again when the burn is complete.



Kevin S. Dixon is the conservation agent for Henry County, which is in the Kansas City region. If you would like to contact the agent for your county, phone your regional Conservation office listed on page 3.

behind the CODE

Spring opener preserves turkeys, helps hunters.

BY TOM Cwynar

Following the Conservation Department's successful restoration of wild turkeys in Missouri, we've enjoyed uninterrupted years of spring turkey hunting. Since the first "modern" spring turkey season in 1960, the number of counties open to spring turkey hunting has increased from 14 to all 114 counties, spring turkey seasons have become longer and bag limits have doubled.

The opening day of the spring turkey season has always generally coincided with when hen turkeys are incubating their first clutch of eggs. This ensures that most of the hens are bred before the hunting season begins. This time is also good for hunters because gobblers eager for hens, many of which are not available, call frequently and are more likely to respond to calls by hunters.

Only once, Sunday, April 22, 1962, has turkey season opened on a weekend. Weekday openings were preferred because fewer hunters afield meant that the chances of hunters interfering with one another were less.

From 1988 to 2006, spring turkey season opened on the Monday closest to April 21. Last year, in response to hunters requesting an earlier opening day, the Conservation Department officially changed the opener to the third Monday in April. The two-day youth season opens nine days earlier, unless that day falls on Easter weekend. In that case, the youth season would open 16 days earlier than the third Monday in April.



“I AM CONSERVATION”

Ron Tuttle, of Shannon County, is a professional logger. He insists on logging practices that protect the land and forests. “To some people logging is a bad word; hopefully, by using BMP’s [best management practices], we can change peoples’ attitudes toward loggers,” said Tuttle. “The world demands more environmentally minded products so we have to change with the times.” He was rewarded for his commitment to excellence with the 2007 Missouri State Logger of the Year Award. “It was an honor and great surprise when I was named Logger of the Year,” said Tuttle. To learn more about conservation activities, visit www.MissouriConservation.org. —PHOTO BY DAVID STONNER



Subscribe online

www.MissouriConservation.org/15287

Free to
Missouri households